



**The Comptroller General  
of the United States**

Washington, D.C. 20548

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## **Decision**

**Matter of:** T-L-C Systems  
**File:** B-227470  
**Date:** September 21, 1987

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### **DIGEST**

Where solicitation's purchase description called for a brand name or equal fire alarm system, but failed to list any salient characteristics for use in evaluating equal products, solicitation was properly canceled as defective.

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### **DECISION**

T-L-C Systems protests the cancellation of a request for quotations (RFQ), issued by the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center in Prescott, Arizona, for a Digitized Decoder Model EDS-6, or equal. The protester seeks award of the contract for the fire alarm system as the low, responsive offeror under the RFQ. We deny the protest.

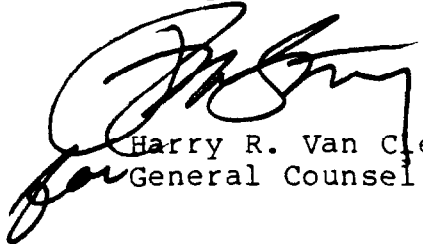
The protester submitted the low quote of \$6,980 for an equal product, but the brand name or equal description in the RFQ did not list salient characteristics for use in evaluating equal products. The VA thus canceled the RFQ as defective with the intention of resoliciting after correcting the problem.

In a brand name or equal procurement, the contracting agency has an obligation to inform bidders of the salient characteristics of the brand name product essential to the government. See Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), 48 C.F.R. § 10.001, 10.004(b) (1986). We have held that failure of a solicitation to list the salient characteristics of the desired item improperly restricts competition by precluding potential offerors of equal products from determining what characteristics are considered essential for its item to be accepted, and that cancellation or

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amendment of the solicitation thus is required. See Environmental Tectonics Corp., B-224104.2, Nov. 17, 1986, 86-2 CPD ¶ 567. Consequently, we find the VA's decision to cancel the RFQ unobjectionable.

The protest is denied.



Harry R. Van Cleave  
General Counsel